

October 1, 2018

Andrew R. Wheeler, JD, MBA
Acting Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

The undersigned groups write with great concern about the news reportsⁱ that Dr. Ruth Etzel, director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Children's Health Protection (OCHP), has been placed on administrative leave.

Established in 1997, OCHP is the only office within EPA dedicated to the health of children. Children are not little adults, and OCHP, as well as its pediatrician leadership, have the expertise to inform EPA policymaking so that it adequately protects children. Without this office and pediatric expertise, we are concerned that EPA policy could inadvertently harm or exclude children.

By placing Dr. Etzel on leave, the EPA has sent a signal that children's health is not a priority for the agency. We are particularly perplexed that this move has happened mere days before the start of Children's Health Month. The undersigned groups ask that EPA immediately clarify what action it has taken with regards to Dr. Etzel and with regards to OCHP, and make no further attempts to dismantle, re-organize, diminish, or otherwise reduce the abilities and authorities of OCHP.

In addition, by this letter the undersigned organizations formally request a meeting with you and the heads of our organizations. To arrange this meeting, please contact Ami Gadhia at the American Academy of Pediatrics, at agadhia@aap.org or (202) 347-8600.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
African American Health Alliance
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Allergy & Asthma Network
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy Pediatrics, Maryland Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Pennsylvania Chapter
American Pediatric Society

American Public Health Association
As You Sow
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Black Millennials for Flint
Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
California Brain Tumor Association
California Safe Schools
Center for Climate Change and Health
Center for Environmental Health
Central California Asthma Collaborative
Ceres Community Project
Child Care Aware® of America
Childhood Lead Action Project
Children's Environmental Health Network
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Clean Water Action
Climate for Health
Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning
Collaborative for High Performance Schools
Collaborative on Health and the Environment
Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health
Daily Acts Organization
Earthjustice
ecoAmerica
Ecology Center
Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Health Strategy Center
Environmental Health Student Association
Environmental Health Watch
Environmental Integrity Project
Environmental Working Group

Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics Safety
First Focus
Green & Healthy Homes Initiative
Health Care Without Harm
Healthy Babies Bright Futures
Healthy Building Network
Healthy Children Project
Healthy Schools Network
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders
International Society for Children's Health and the Environment
International Society of Environmental Epidemiology
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins Department of Environmental Health and Engineering
Lead Safe Mama, LLC
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Learning Disabilities Association of Illinois
Learning Disabilities Association of Maine
Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota
Learning Disabilities Association of South Carolina
Learning Disabilities Association of Tennessee
Learning Disabilities Association of Utah
Learning Disabilities Association of Western New York
Learning Disabilities of America of Texas
March of Dimes
Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health
Moms Clean Air Force
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early
Education
Natural Resources Defense Council
Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition

Ohio Environmental Council
Ohio Healthy Homes Network
Oregon Environmental Council
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Parents For Students Safety
Pediatric Public Health Initiative
Pennsylvania Head Start Association
Pennsylvania Integrated Pest Management Program
Pesticide Action Network
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Tennessee Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles
Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Pennsylvania Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Wisconsin Chapter and the
Wisconsin Environmental Health Network
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Philadelphia
Physicians for Social Responsibility, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Colorado Chapter
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Florida Chapter
Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition
Prevention Institute
Public Health Institute
Rachel Carson Council
Rachel's Network
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Revitalize Community Development Corporation
Riley Asthma Program
Safer Chemicals Healthy Families
Safer States
Sears-Swetland Family Foundation
Sierra Club
Society for Public Health Education
Sonoma County Conservation Action

Southern Adirondack Child Care Network
Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership
The Great Lakes Center for Children's Environmental Health
Toxics Information Project
Trust for America's Health
UCLA Center for Occupational and Environmental Health
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
UCSF School of Nursing California Childcare Health Program
UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment
Union of Concerned Scientists
Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Women for a Healthy Environment
350 Bay Area

ⁱ "E.P.A. Places the Head of Its Office of Children's Health on Leave," available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/26/climate/epa-etzel-children-health-program.html>.